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Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 17 July 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure of enclosing an assessment of the work of the Security Council under the Canadian Presidency in April 2000, prepared pursuant to the provisions of the note by the President of the Security Council dated 12 June 1997 (S/1997/451).

Although other members of the Security Council were consulted with regard to its contents, the assessment was prepared under the responsibility of Ambassador Robert R. Fowler, and should not necessarily be considered as representative of the views of the Security Council or its members.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the text of this letter and the attached assessment as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 11, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ross **Hynes**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

00-54243 (E) 310700

Annex to the letter dated 17 July 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Assessment of the work of the Security Council

Canada (April 2000)

This assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of April 2000 has been prepared under the responsibility of its President during that month, Robert Fowler, Permanent Representative of Canada.

Introduction

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Lloyd Axworthy, presided over six meetings, underlining Canada's political commitment to a strong, active and effective Security Council. The Council addressed a wide range of specific and thematic international peace and security issues in all regions of the world, discussing Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Iraq, Kosovo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, as well as issues relating to sanctions and the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Council members agreed on a demanding programme of work: 10 formal meetings (one of which was private), 14 informal consultations of the whole, and one meeting with troop contributors, chaired by the President of the Security Council, were held. During the month, the Council adopted unanimously three resolutions (the United Nations Office in Angola, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and sanctions against UNITA); issued two presidential statements (Afghanistan and the situation in the Middle East/south Lebanon); and circulated one note by the President (sanctions). The Council also decided to dispatch two missions of Security Council members to the field: the first, to Kosovo, from 27 to 29 April, was sent to review the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999); the second, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, departed on 2 May with a view to exploring with signatories to the Lusaka Agreement concrete ways to ensure the rapid and full implementation of that Agreement and of resolution 1291 (2000).

April also saw an increased Council focus on the human dimension of international security. The centrepiece of what the Presidency described as "the month of human security" was an open debate on 19 April, chaired by Mr. Axworthy, on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, at which a resolution was adopted. At that meeting, held as follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on this question, Council members and non-members alike took the opportunity to comment on the future direction of Council action to protect civilians caught up in armed conflicts around the world. In an effort to increase the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions, Mr. Axworthy also chaired an open meeting on 17 April, which allowed for a broad discussion of sanctions regimes, policy and practice, and resulted in the creation of an informal mechanism to review all aspects of the administration of United Nations sanctions.

In keeping with the theme of human security, and in order to ensure full consideration of the report of the Independent Inquiry on the Rwandan genocide, commissioned by the Secretary-General in 1999, the Council held an open meeting on 14 April, which featured a briefing by the Inquiry's chairman, the former Prime Minister of Sweden. Council members and the chairman stressed the importance of absorbing "lessons learned" from Rwanda.

Also in keeping with the theme of human security, the Presidency proposed a discussion of the Sudan to highlight the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict there and to lend Council backing to regional peace efforts. There was, however, no agreement among Council members on holding such a discussion and the item was not included in the programme of work.

The Presidency made available on a daily basis the Council's updated programme of work, and statements by the President to the media, on the Canadian Mission's web site (http://www.un.int/canada). The Presidency also gave detailed briefings

immediately after consultations of the whole, for countries which are not members of the Security Council. Overall, the Canadian Presidency pursued a number of initiatives from past presidencies, designed to make the Council more transparent, accountable and responsive in the way it operates.

General issues

Sanctions

To examine general issues related to United Nations sanctions regimes, the Security Council held an open meeting on 17 April. The Council's deliberations built on a discussion that morning, hosted by the International Peace Academy to launch a Canadian-sponsored study, *The Sanctions Decade*, which offered a detailed analysis of past practice.

The meeting, chaired by the Foreign Minister of Canada, opened with a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Kieran Prendergast, in which he described the lessons learned from a recent review undertaken by the Secretariat, as well as from recent seminars at Bonn and Interlaken, to develop more effective and humane United Nations sanctions. The conclusions and recommendations focused on the issues of the impact of sanctions on civilians and third party States; their uneven application; and the trend towards developing "smart" sanctions, by encouraging the Council to adopt greater clarity and uniformity of language and technical terminology in resolutions, as well as specifying criteria for lifting or suspending measures. In subsequent statements by Council members and many other delegations, the majority acknowledged that the case for sanctions remained compelling, while calling for their refinement and improved effectiveness. To further the Council's work in this area, a note by the President (S/2000/319), which announced the Council's decision to establish an informal working group to develop general recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions, was issued on the same day.

Civilians in armed conflict

An "Arria formula" meeting, chaired by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, Peter van Walsum, was held on 12 April to hear briefings by senior representatives of three major non-governmental organizations (Guy Tousignant of CARE International, James Orbinski of Médecins sans frontières and Paul Smith-Lomas of Oxfam) which assist civilian populations during complex emergencies. The briefers urged Council members to separate humanitarian concerns from political considerations when mandates for United Nations missions are drafted, and stressed that greater priority should be given to the plight of internally displaced persons.

Throughout April, an informal working group of the Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict continued to meet frequently to complete the negotiation of a draft resolution. On 19 April, Mr. Axworthy chaired an open meeting of the Council to address the issue, and to adopt the draft negotiated in the working group. The Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Jakob Kellenberger, addressed the meeting. At the outset, the Secretary-General noted that last year's Council meetings (February and September 1999) and his report on this issue (S/1999/957) were being followed up with concrete steps, by both the Council and the General Assembly, and highlighted three of his earlier recommendations: the pressing requirement for a United Nations rapid deployment capability; the importance of making better use of preventive missions; and the need to improve the security of refugee camps. The President of ICRC addressed the efforts of that organization worldwide to protect vulnerable populations. Following interventions by Council members and non-members, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1296 (2000) which, *inter alia*, indicated the Council's willingness to take appropriate steps when humanitarian access is denied or when refugees and internally displaced persons are seriously threatened. The Council called for peacekeeping missions to be provided with adequate human and financial resources to protect civilians under imminent physical threat, and reaffirmed the need for special provision for women, children and other vulnerable groups in all aspects of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building.

Africa

Angola

United Nations Office in Angola. Council members met on 13 April in consultations to hear a briefing by the Adviser of the Secretary-General for

Special Assignments in Africa, Ibrahim Gambari, on recent developments in Angola, further to the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Office in Angola (S/2000/304). The Under-Secretary-General provided an update on political and military events, noting that the operations of the Office had focused on humanitarian relief and human rights capacity-building. The Council then adopted unanimously resolution 1294 (2000), in which it reaffirmed its view that a continued United Nations presence in Angola could greatly contribute to the promotion of peace, national reconciliation, human rights and regional security, and extended the mandate of the Office for six months.

Sanctions against UNITA. The Security Council, chaired by the Foreign Minister of Canada, held an open meeting on 18 April, to consider the report of the Expert Panel on sanctions against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), established pursuant to resolution 1237 (1999). Noting that the sanctions were finally affecting the ability of UNITA to wage war, Ambassador Fowler, as chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993) concerning the situation in Angola, presented a draft resolution implementing the bulk of the recommendations contained in the report, which he had presented to the Security Council on 15 March. In the discussion that followed, Council members expressed support for the activist efforts of the Angola Sanctions Committee to date and most offered strong support for the Panel's forthright, far-sighted and innovative recommendations. Many members and non-members highlighted the continuing responsibility of UNITA for the ongoing hostilities in Angola, and urged an ever more rigorous implementation of the sanctions regime. The Council adopted unanimously resolution 1295 (2000) at the close of the meeting, tightening existing sanctions against UNITA; establishing a new monitoring mechanism; and putting into place a process whereby the Council would, after taking into account the report of the new monitoring mechanism and information offered by countries named in the Panel's report as sanctions busters, consider in November appropriate action in relation to States it believed were continuing to violate the sanctions against UNITA.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Council members met in an Arria formula meeting on 7 April, chaired by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Curtis Ward, with representatives of Parliamentarians for Global Action, who reported on the results of a workshop, held at Lusaka from 20 to 23 March, on peace-building efforts in Central Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in support of the Lusaka Agreement.

On 12 April, Council members were briefed in consultations by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet, on developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the ceasefire and disengagement agreement reached on 8 April among Lusaka signatories. The Under-Secretary-General noted that the agreement lent additional urgency to the question of the rapid deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), highlighting the need for specialized military units. He also expressed concern regarding the grim humanitarian situation. Following consultations, the President, on behalf of Council members, made a statement to the media (see below), welcoming the agreement of 8 April and stressing the importance of the Lusaka parties' adherence to the ceasefire and disengagement plan. Council members also expressed their readiness to do everything possible to speed up the pace of the Mission's phased deployment.

The President also announced on 12 April that the Council had agreed to dispatch a Security Council mission to the region, to discuss with all signatories to the Lusaka Agreement concrete ways to ensure their support and commitment to early implementation of that Agreement and of resolution 1291 (1999). On 24 April, the President wrote to the Secretary-General (S/2000/344), advising him of the mission's terms of reference, its early May departure date, and that it would be headed by Ambassador Holbrooke of the United States of America, in addition to the Ambassadors of France, Mali, Namibia, the Netherlands, Tunisia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Following the receipt on 18 April of the report of the Secretary-General on MONUC (S/2000/330 and Corr.1), Council members held consultations on 25

April, to hear a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Kamel Morjane. The Special Representative reported on the disengagement plan of 8 April, and on the ceasefire which had come into effect on 14 April. Council members welcomed the positive developments arising from the plan but noted that the challenges ahead must not be overlooked or minimized. Following consultations, the Security Council met in private to hear from Sir Ketumile Masire, facilitator of the inter-Congolese national dialogue, who outlined the financial and resource constraints he was facing in the implementation of his mandate, the status of his work and next steps. Council members expressed strong support and encouragement for his work. The Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, André Mwamba Kapanga, participated in the meeting, and, while his Government did not accept Sir Ketumile's work plan unreservedly, he invited the facilitator to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue his work. A communiqué was issued following the meeting (S/PV.4132).

Council members again discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in consultations on 27 April. Following those discussions, the President on 29 April wrote to the Secretary-General (S/2000/362), in response to the latter's letter of 18 April (S/2000/334) suggesting that the Security Council might wish to consider creating a panel of experts to investigate the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The President advised the Secretary-General that Council members were giving full and active consideration to the creation of an expert group and intended to come to a decision expeditiously, taking into account, *inter alia,* the conclusions of the Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Ethiopia and Eritrea

During April, in a number of consultations, Council members discussed the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, including efforts by the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and others to achieve peace. Following consultations on 26 April, the President spoke to the media on behalf of Council members, conveying their strong support for proximity talks which were to convene at Algiers on 29 April; Council members urged the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea to participate in the talks with a renewed commitment to resolving their dispute through peaceful means (see below).

Rwanda

On 14 April, the Council met in open session to discuss the report of the Independent Inquiry into the actions of the United Nations during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda (S/1999/1257). This meeting, chaired by the Foreign Minister of Canada, was the first time the Council had considered the findings and recommendations of the Inquiry since the Secretary-General had transmitted the report to the Council in December 1999. Ingvar Carlsson, former Prime Minister of Sweden and chairman of the Inquiry, briefed the Council and summarized the report's recommendations. Statements by Council members, and by the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, highlighted the importance of lessons learned from the Rwandan tragedy, including the need to carefully tailor peacekeeping mandates and to provide the resources necessary to implement them, and acknowledged the responsibility of the United Nations, including the Security Council, in failing to come to grips with the evolving crisis.

Sierra Leone

On 27 April, Council members received a briefing in informal consultations from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, following incidents involving soldiers of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) near disarmament, demobilization and reintegration centres of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Following the consultations, the President, on behalf of the members of the Council, spoke to the media, advising that the Assistant Secretary-General had been asked to convey members' concerns about such incidents to the RUF leadership, through appropriate United Nations channels; he noted that the Council would discuss the situation again, on receipt of the next report of the Secretary-General on UNAMSIL early in May (see below).

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 7 April, the Secretary-General conveyed to the Council the monthly report on the operations of the

stabilization force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/2000/297).

Croatia

On 11 April, the Council received a report (S/2000/305) from the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP), pursuant to resolution 1285 (2000). On 28 April, on behalf of the Security Council, the President advised the Secretary-General by letter (S/2000/359) that the Council continued to support UNMOP in the fulfilment of its mandate.

Georgia

The Council received on 24 April the report of the Secretary-General (S/2000/345) concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the operations of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

Resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

From early April, the Presidency followed up on different aspects of the proposed Security Council mission to Kosovo. Following consultations in the first part of April, consensus was reached on the draft terms of reference introduced by Bangladesh in March. In a letter dated 14 April (S/2000/320), the President advised the Secretary-General that the Council, concerned about obstacles to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999), had agreed to accept the invitation of his Special Representative, Bernard Kouchner, to visit Kosovo. The letter outlined the mission's objectives, which included observing the operations of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and looking for ways of enhancing support for resolution 1244 (1999). In preparation for the mission, Council members received a briefing on the situation in Kosovo and UNMIK from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations in consultations on 24 April. He highlighted the many achievements of UNMIK in very difficult circumstances, but cautioned that substantial challenges remained.

The mission, headed by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, and composed of Ambassadors from Argentina, Canada, China, Jamaica, Malaysia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, visited Kosovo from 27 to 29 April. The mission issued its findings in a report (S/2000/363) which was discussed by Council members early in May.

The Secretary-General also conveyed to the Council on 17 April the report of the international security presence in Kosovo for the period from 23 February to 22 March 2000 (see S/2000/318).

Middle East

Iraq

International Atomic Energy Agency. The Council received a letter dated 10 April from the Secretary-General (S/2000/300) forwarding a letter from the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with regard to that Agency's verification mission to Iraq. IAEA reported that it could not verify Iraq's compliance with obligations imposed under Security Council resolutions.

United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission. On 5 April, Council members were briefed in consultations by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the operations of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), and its proposed renewal for six months, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report (S/2000/269). The President wrote to the Secretary-General on 5 April (S/2000/286), advising him that members concurred with his recommendation to maintain UNIKOM for six months. The Council will next review the operations of UNIKOM by 6 October 2000. In advance of the Council discussion, a meeting of troop contributors to UNIKOM was chaired by the President on 4 April.

United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. Council members received on 6 April a note by the Secretary-General (S/2000/292), transmitting for approval the organizational plan for the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Members met in consultations on 13 April to hear a briefing from the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, Hans Blix. He discussed the structure, organization, budget and staffing of UNMOVIC, noting that UNMOVIC commissioners planned to meet late in May, allowing him to report back to the Council in early June. On 13 April, the President wrote to the Secretary-General (S/2000/311), advising him that the

members of the Council had discussed and, on that basis, approved the plan as being in keeping with paragraph 6 of resolution 1284 (1999), and looked forward to consultations on its implementation. The President subsequently spoke to the media, on behalf of Council members, regarding the Council's consultations and the letter to the Secretary-General.

Kuwaiti and third party nationals. On 26 April, Council members met in consultations to consider the report of the Secretary-General (S/2000/347 and Corr.1) on issues relating to Kuwaiti and third-party nationals, prepared pursuant to paragraph 14 of resolution 1244 (1996). The Secretary-General's high-level coordinator, Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, outlined his efforts to date and future plans. Following consultations, the President, on behalf of Council members, spoke to the media, stating that Council members had expressed their unanimous support for Ambassador Vorontsov's work (see below). Members also expressed their deep concern about the plight of Kuwaiti and third party nationals and their hope that this issue would be dealt with as a strictly humanitarian one by all concerned, and highlighted the valuable work of ICRC. Council members stressed the importance of dialogue among all parties, and urged Iraq to cooperate with Ambassador Vorontsov and to resume cooperation with all other bodies dealing with this issue.

Situation in the Middle East/Lebanon

In April, the Secretary-General wrote to the President of the Council, advising him of the decision of the Government of Israel to withdraw its forces present in Lebanon by July 2000 (S/2000/294 of 6 April and S/2000/322 of 17 April). Following several consultations, the Council met on 20 April to issue a presidential statement (S/PRST/2000/13) endorsing the Secretary-General's stated intention to initiate preparations to enable the United Nations to carry out its responsibilities under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). The statement also stressed that the Council shared the view of the Secretary-General that cooperation by all parties concerned would be required in order to avoid a deterioration of the situation.

Asia

Afghanistan

In a letter dated 4 April from the Permanent Representative of Argentina and Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning the situation in Afghanistan, the Council received the Committee's latest report (S/2000/282).

Following informal consultations on 7 April, the Security Council held an open briefing, chaired by the Foreign Minister of Canada, on the situation in Afghanistan. The briefing reviewed political, military and economic developments, and the human rights situation, since the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2000/205). In response to questions raised by several Council members, the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Angela King, urged the Council to continue to press for the human and political rights of women in Afghanistan. At a second meeting, the Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2000/12), *inter alia*, reiterating members' grave concern at the continuing conflict and unacceptable human rights situation in Afghanistan, and holding the Taliban leadership responsible for non-compliance with previous Security Council resolutions.

East Timor

On 27 April, the Security Council held an open briefing on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations discussed four main issues, namely, the overall security situation in the territory; refugees; economic and social conditions; and benchmarks that need to be achieved on the path to independence. He reported that the security situation was relatively stable, and improving, including along the border with West Timor. Given the significant destruction of civilian infrastructure in the aftermath of the popular consultation held on 30 August 1999, economic conditions remain a primary concern for UNTAET. The Transitional Administration is faced with strong pressure and high expectations from the local population, and the situation is complicated by the lack of skilled labour in the territory. Members expressed concern about the continuing high numbers of refugees in West Timor, and the condition of the camps there,

with some voicing disquiet over allegations of continued Indonesian armed forces involvement with West Timorese militias. Many delegations expressed respect and admiration for the work accomplished to date under difficult conditions by UNTAET personnel and the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

Other matters

The Working Group on Documentation and Procedure continued discussions initiated under the Presidency of Bangladesh, considering how best to communicate Council resolutions, presidential statements and statements to the press to non-State actors, and issues relating to the Council's monthly tentative forecast of work. The Department of Public Information provided the Working Group with a presentation on the Security Council's web site, with a view to making the Council's programme of work available electronically. Finally, the Working Group discussed the issue of meeting nomenclature and considered an outline and description of various Council meeting formats so as to promote greater clarity as to the options available to Council members and the constraints and advantages of each.

Following the death of the former President of Tunisia, the Foreign Minister of Canada, on behalf of Council members, paid tribute to the late Habib Bourguiba at the beginning of the Security Council meeting on 7 April. Mr Axworthy conveyed members' condolences and deep sorrow to the Government and people of Tunisia.

On 13 April, the President met with the Minister of Defence of Indonesia, Jawono Sudarson, regarding the situation in East and West Timor.

Throughout April, the Presidency sought to follow through on Canada's commitment to increasing the transparency of Security Council workings to the broader membership of the United Nations. The Presidency continued the practice of providing in-depth briefings to non-Council members after each informal meeting, and distributed copies of press statements at those briefings.

The Canadian Presidency web site, http://www.un.int/canada, maintained by the Canadian Mission, was regularly updated with the Council's tentative programme of work, statements to the media and statements from open briefings and debates, in both French and English. The site also included a link to the United Nations Security Council documents page.

Further to the note of 31 March by the President (S/2000/274) regarding the distribution of statements at Council meetings, an initiative of the Presidency of Bangladesh, the new system of distributing statements within the formal chamber worked very well in its first month.

Statements to the press by the President of the Security Council

Democratic Republic of the Congo (12 April 2000)

Council members received a comprehensive briefing today by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet, on recent developments on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Council members welcomed the Political Committee's decision on 8 April 2000 in Kampala to adopt a plan for a ceasefire and the disengagement and redeployment of forces.

Council members stressed the importance of the parties to the Lusaka Agreement fulfilling implementation of the plan and adhering to the ceasefire.

In this respect, Council members emphasized that the task of MONUC remains monitoring of the disengagement of forces. Council members expressed their readiness to do everything possible to speed up the pace of MONUC phase II deployment to oversee the disengagement plan.

Council members also commended the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Kamel Morjane, and of MONUC personnel, to facilitate MONUC deployment.

Members reiterated their concern at the humanitarian situation and noted the mandate of MONUC to facilitate humanitarian relief. In this context, members reiterated the need for all parties to ensure the safe access of relief personnel to all those in need.

Council members expressed concern at continuing shortcomings in MONUC resources and in donors' response to the United Nations consolidated appeal for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and encouraged donors to respond urgently.

Council members agreed to dispatch a Security Council mission to the region, to discuss with all signatories to the Lusaka Agreement concrete ways to ensure their support and full commitment to early and full implementation of the Agreement and Security Council resolution 1291 (1999), and are now discussing the logistics.

Iraq (26 April 2000)

Members of the Council heard this morning from Ambassador Vorontsov, the Secretary-General's high-level coordinator for Kuwaiti and third party nationals issues.

Members of the Council expressed their unanimous support for Ambassador Vorontsov's work, for his report transmitted through the Secretary-General on 20 April, and for his future efforts.

Members of the Council expressed their deep concern for the plight of Kuwaiti and third party nationals and expressed their hope that this issue would be dealt with as a strictly humanitarian one by all sides concerned. They highlighted the valuable work of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In this respect, members of the Council stressed the importance of dialogue among all parties, and urged Iraq to cooperate with Ambassador Vorontsov and resume cooperation with all other agencies and bodies dealing with this issue.

Eritrea and Ethiopia (26 April 2000)

Members of the Council were informed through the President that the Organization of African Unity's Chairman, Algeria, has established an early starting date, as early as 29 April, for proximity talks between Ethiopia and Eritrea in Algiers to resolve their ongoing dispute. Members expressed their strong support for the continuing OAU peace process and for the efforts of OAU and the President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Boutflika, in this regard.

Council members noted prior commitments made by both parties to attend early proximity talks under OAU direction and urged the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea to participate in the talks with a renewed commitment to peace.

Members underlined their deep concern regarding this issue, urged the parties to resolve their dispute through peaceful means, and will continue to follow the situation closely.

Situation in Sierra Leone (27 April 2000)

Members of the Council were briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, on the situation in Sierra Leone and UNAMSIL.

Council members discussed recent incidents involving UNAMSIL and RUF soldiers. The Assistant Secretary-General was asked to convey Security Council concerns about such incidents, through appropriate channels. The Council will be discussing the situation again in the near future, when the report of the Secretary-General on UNAMSIL is received early in May.